

A Brief Look at the Bible on Stars and other Heavenly Objects

I. The Creation of Light

A. "And God said, 'Let there be light'; and there was light." Genesis 1:3 NIV.

1. "Light is one of the most astonishing productions of the creative skill and power of God. It is the grand medium by which all His other works are discovered, examined, and understood, so far as they can be known. Its immense diffusion and extreme velocity are alone sufficient to demonstrate the being and wisdom of God." Adam Clarke commentary.

2. Another commentary suggested Genesis 1:3 refers to light and heat, as from friction, without which other created things could not have survived.

a. Planet Earth must have already been at a livable temperature to support the existence of liquid water by the time of Genesis 1:9.

3. "... light is created distinct from, and previous to, light-emitting bodies, the luminaries of heaven" Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown commentary.

B. "Where is the way to the dwelling of light? And darkness, where is its place, that you may take it to its territory and that you may discern the paths to its home?" Job 38:19-20 NASB.

1. "How, except by divine inspiration, could Job have known that light does not dwell in a place, but a way? For light, as modern man has discovered, involves motion (wave motion). Traveling 186,000 miles a second, it can only dwell in a way." Footnote, Amplified Version on Job 38:19.

2. Light is said to have both a wave nature and a particle nature.

a. Study of this fascinating topic might be a cure for nights with insomnia; it seems to be a matter of contention among scientists.

C. It is obvious that we do not have all the details of how God went about His creative tasks.

1. When (not to mention how) did He create magnetism? And electricity?

2. Gravitational attraction must have been already created/instituted to hold together the atoms & molecules comprising other created objects.

a. "For it was in Him that all things were created, in heaven and on earth, things seen and things unseen, whether thrones, dominions, rulers, or authorities; all things were created and exist through Him [by His service, intervention] and in and for Him. And He Himself existed before all things, and **in Him all things consist** (cohere, are held together)." Colossians 1:16-17 Amplified. [emphasis added]

(1) Might this scripture mean that Christ injected energy into each atom, causing the neutrons & protons to cling together in the nucleus, and causing electrons to orbit the nucleus at their very specific distances?

II. The Creation of Stars

A. "He also made the stars." Genesis 1:16 NIV; Amplified.

1. Simple, huh?

2. No new star births have been observed; stars are only seen aging and dying.

a. Evolutionary science refers to it as a given but no evidence exists.

B. A few Bible verses mentioning stars:

1. "He counts the number of the stars; He gives names to all of them." Psalm 147:4 NASB.

2. "Can you bind the chains of the Pleiades, Or loose the cords of Orion? Can you lead forth a constellation in its season, And guide the Bear with her satellites? Do you know

the ordinances of the heavens, Or fix their rule over the earth?" Job 38:31-33 NASB.

a. Some words in these verses occur very few times in scripture (i.e., Pleiades and Orion are mentioned here and repeated in Amos 5:8), and definite identification of the particular constellations is considered murky.

b. An article at helpmewithbiblestudy.org credited to astronomer Barry Setterfield (and citing professor Fred Hoyle) says the Pleiades is a bound cluster, that most other open clusters are breaking up or moving apart, and that most stars in Orion constitute an open cluster that is breaking up. We have not encountered this information elsewhere. Most commentaries miss this, offering instead references to seasonal matters. Either way, such stellar motion is on a time scale we cannot easily discern.

3. "The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament shows and proclaims His handiwork. Day after day pours forth speech, and night after night shows forth knowledge. There is no speech nor spoken word [from the stars]; their voice is not heard. Yet their voice [in evidence] goes out through all the earth, their sayings to the end of the world. Of the heavens has God made a tent for the sun, Which is as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber; and it rejoices as a strong man to run his course. Its going forth is from the end of the heavens, and its circuit to the ends of it; and nothing [yes, no one] is hidden from the heat of it." Psalm 19:1-6 Amplified.

a. The reference to the circuit for the sun may fit better if we consider the annual path of the sun rather than the daily.

III. The Creation of the Sun & Moon

A. "Then God said, 'Let there be lights in the expanse of the heavens to separate the day from the night, and they shall serve as signs and for seasons, and for days and years; and they shall serve as lights in the expanse of the heavens to give light on the earth'; and it was so. God made the two great lights, the greater light to govern the day, and the lesser light to govern the night; He made the stars also. God placed them in the expanse of the heavens to give light on the earth, and to govern the day and the night, and to separate the light from the darkness; and God saw that it was good. And there was evening and there was morning, a fourth day." Genesis 1:14-19, NASB.

1. It is worth noting that light had existed since Day 1 but the Sun was created on Day 4 or perhaps became visible on Earth: "The earth was without form and an empty waste, and darkness was upon the face of the very great deep. The Spirit of God was moving (hovering, brooding) over the face of the waters." Genesis 1:2 Amplified.

a. Some commentaries suggest Genesis 1:14-19 refer to the Sun and Moon being appointed to their tasks.

3. "Let them ever be considered as continual tokens of God's tender care for man, and as standing proofs of his continual miraculous interference." Adam Clarke commentary.

4. The Moon is called a great light (as is the Sun), probably comparing its light to that of the far more distant stars. Being the second brightest object in our sky, it can accurately be said to "rule the night."

a. In Psalm 136:9, the moon and stars are said to "rule by night."

IV. Does a Stargazer's Appreciation of the Heavens Differ from Astrology?

A. Inappropriate attitudes toward the starry heavens:

1. "If I beheld [as an object of worship] the sunlight when it shone or the moon walking in its brightness, And my heart has been secretly enticed by them or my mouth has kissed my hand [in homage to them], This also would have been [a heinous and principal] iniquity to demand the judges' action and punishment, for I would have denied and been false to the God Who is above." Job 31:26-28 Amplified.

2. "And beware not to lift up your eyes to heaven and see the sun and the moon and the stars, all the host of heaven, and be drawn away and worship them and serve them, those which the Lord your God has allotted to all the peoples under the whole heaven." Deuteronomy 4:19 NASB.

3. "At that time, declares the Lord, the bones of the kings and officials of Judah, the bones of the priests and prophets, and the bones of the people of Jerusalem will be removed from their graves. They will be exposed to the sun and the moon and all the stars of the heavens, which they have loved and served and which they have followed and consulted and worshiped. They will not be gathered up or buried, but will be like dung lying on the ground. Wherever I banish them, all the survivors of this evil nation will prefer death to life, declares the Lord Almighty." Jeremiah 8:1-3 NIV.

4. "But God turned [away from them] and delivered them up to worship and serve the host (stars) of heaven, as it is written in the book of the prophets: Did you [really] offer to Me slain beasts and sacrifices for forty years in the wilderness (desert), O house of Israel? [No!] You took up the tent (the portable temple) of Moloch and carried it [with you], and the star of the god Rephan, the images which you [yourselves] made that you might worship them; and I will remove you [carrying you away into exile] beyond Babylon." Acts 7:42-43 Amplified.

a. One commentary said that since false gods were carried about by those who worship and trust them (like good luck charms), that God would carry those people away.

b. Rephan, or Remphan, might be a reference to the planet Saturn.

(1) Planet means wanderer. Older cultures observed that the planets move independently of the background stars. Optical devices to reveal how different planets are have only existed some 400 years.

B. More favorable scriptural references to looking upward:

1. "Lord, our Lord, how majestic is Your name in all the earth! You have set Your glory in the heavens." "When I consider Your heavens, the work of Your fingers, the moon and the stars, which You have set in place, what is mankind that You are mindful of them, human beings that You care for them? You have made them a little lower than the angels and crowned them with glory and honor." "Lord, our Lord, how majestic is Your name in all the earth!"

Psalm 8:1,3-5,9 NIV.

2. "And He took (Abram) outside and said, "Now look toward the heavens, and count the stars, if you are able to count them." And He said to him, "So shall your descendants be." Then he believed in the Lord; and He reckoned it to him as righteousness." Genesis 15:5-6 NIV.

3. "To whom then will you liken Me That I would be his equal?" says the Holy One. Lift up your eyes on high And see who has created these stars, The One who leads forth their host by number, He calls them all by name; Because of the greatness of His might and the strength of His power, Not one of them is missing." Isaiah 40:25-26 NASB.

V. The Ecliptic and the Zodiac

A. The ecliptic is the annual path of the sun.

1. Think of a plane through the center of the Earth extending into the sky. The sun is always on that plane, and the center of Earth is always on that plane.

a. For a moment, set aside Earth's diurnal rotation and consider only the annual motion around the sun. While maintaining a 23-1/2° tilt, Earth slowly orbits the sun, taking one year (by definition) to do so. This causes the north and south hemispheres to alternately tilt toward and away from the sun, creating seasons.

(1) It is an interesting experiment to note where on your horizon the sun rises and sets throughout the year.

b. While slowly orbiting the sun, Earth is simultaneously spinning daily, and this complicates our grasp on where the ecliptic is at any particular time.

(1) A visual for middle latitudes – for this demonstration it might be helpful to stand outside. Extend your arms straight out, toward southeast and northwest; at one time each and every day, your arms are parallel to the plane of the ecliptic. Now turn so your arms are extended northeast and southwest; twelve hours after the time noted in the prior statement, where your arms are now is parallel to the plane of the ecliptic. In another twelve hours, the ecliptic is once again in the first position. As Earth spins, the ecliptic is constantly moving.

(2) The farther north or south we are on Earth, the farther north and south the ecliptic moves. That you are standing on a sphere complicates the matter.

c. In the night sky we can follow the line of the ecliptic in the constellations; the northernmost location is near the “feet” of Gemini (actually near large open cluster M35) while at its southernmost it is near the teapot of Sagittarius.

d. The sun is farther north in summer (i.e., Gemini) and farther south in winter (i.e., Sagittarius), and the planets are always very near the ecliptic.

2. The moon is always within roughly 5° of the ecliptic. If the moon always tracked the ecliptic, we would have an eclipse every 2 weeks and we would find them boring. God did not waste something that fantastic by making it routine!

a. The moon scoots along a path similar to the sun’s but does that circuit once every 29-1/2 days.

B. The zodiac is a band of sky 8° north and south of the ecliptic.

1. There are 13 constellations located in the band of the zodiac.

a. Constellations are simply areas of sky, defined by their outlines.

(1) Meteor showers are identified by the name of the constellation in which the radiant (the apparent point of origin in the background sky) is located.

(2) The stick figures we impose on the stars are more accurately called asterisms. Some asterisms borrow a star or two from a neighboring constellation (i.e., the Great Square of Pegasus).

(3) The International Astronomical Union set the current boundaries for all constellations in 1930.

2. Astrology reckons only with 12 constellations on the zodiac. The sun spends more time in Ophiuchus than it does in Scorpius but perhaps because it does not sound cool to say one is an Ophiuchi, astrologers ignore the constellation Ophiuchus.

a. Astrologers claim it is all only symbolic, so it doesn’t really matter where the celestial bodies are located - so what is the point of any of their false information? But God takes a mighty dim view on our seeking information that is exclusively His from any other source.

VI. Miscellaneous but Fascinating (to us) Observations

A. How can Creation date back to approximately 6000 years ago but celestial objects are said to be many thousands, millions, and even billions of light-years distant?

1. The speed of light is slowing, and has been slowing as long as humans have been able to measure it; this has produced a small but significant change.

2. God stretched out the heavens as seen in these scriptures:

“He alone stretches out the heavens and treads on the waves of the sea.” Job 9:8

NIV.

"[You are the One] Who covers Yourself with light as with a garment, Who stretches out the heavens like a curtain or a tent." Psalm 104:2 Amplified.

"It is God Who sits above the circle (the horizon) of the earth, and its inhabitants are like grasshoppers; it is He Who stretches out the heavens like [gauze] curtains and spreads them out like a tent to dwell in." Isaiah 40:22 Amplified.

"Thus says God the Lord—He Who created the heavens and stretched them forth, He Who spread abroad the earth and that which comes out of it, He Who gives breath to the people on it and spirit to those who walk in it..." Isaiah 42:5 Amplified.

"Thus says the Lord, your Redeemer, and the one who formed you from the womb, 'I, the Lord, am the maker of all things, Stretching out the heavens by Myself And spreading out the earth all alone.'" Isaiah 44:24 NASB.

"It is I who made the earth and created mankind on it. My own hands stretched out the heavens; I marshaled their starry hosts." Isaiah 45:12 NIV.

"Surely My hand founded the earth, And My right hand spread out the heavens; When I call to them, they stand together." Isaiah 48:13 NASB.

"That you have forgotten the Lord your Maker, Who stretched out the heavens And laid the foundations of the earth, That you fear continually all day long because of the fury of the oppressor, As he makes ready to destroy? But where is the fury of the oppressor?" Isaiah 51:13 NASB.

"It is He who made the earth by His power, Who established the world by His wisdom, And by His understanding He stretched out the heavens." Jeremiah 51:15 NASB.

"A prophecy: The word of the Lord concerning Israel. The Lord, Who stretches out the heavens, Who lays the foundation of the earth, and Who forms the human spirit within a person, declares..." Zechariah 12:1 NIV.

- a. This stretching moved objects to the great distances we see today.

B. Evolutionary science claims the Sun and all the planets orbiting it were formed from a common dust cloud.

1. Why do planets Venus, Uranus, and Pluto spin backwards?
2. Why do at least 30 moons (of the more than 200 moons observed in the Solar System) orbit their planets backwards? Not to mention, many moons' orbits are highly inclined. See Walter Brown for citations and details.
3. While pondering such imponderables, how did Earth come to have so much water compared with other planets in the Solar System?

C. How could globular star clusters exist if the universe evolved?

1. The stars in globular clusters are so close together that when one star "ignites," the solar wind it initially produces would blow away the material needed to form other, nearby stars.
 - a. There are approximately 200 globular clusters in the Milky Way galaxy, and globular star clusters can be seen in external galaxies.
 - b. Stars also could not form near black holes due to the extreme gravity. See Walter Brown for citations and details.

D. The "Canopy Theory" to explain the source of rain at the time of the Flood does not hold water, so to speak.

1. Such a canopy could not contain enough water to flood the entire planet.
2. A canopy would significantly change Earth's climate, probably enough that Earth could not sustain life.
3. Stars were given for signs and seasons (Genesis 1:14) but a canopy would have prevented seeing enough of them for that purpose to be served.

a. The Flood is recorded in Genesis chapter 6, while the first reference to Abram's descendants being as numerous as the stars is in Genesis chapter 15; thus if a canopy existed before the Flood, God meant the stars were created to be signs only after the Flood, which hardly makes sense.

4. Canopy theory is sometimes offered to explain the huge drop in longevity experienced by humanity after the Flood (i.e., the water in the canopy prior to the Flood reduced harmful solar radiation), but the change in longevity did not coincide with the Flood but came later. See Walter Brown for citations and details.

E. The winter solstice, the shortest day in terms of the Sun being above the horizon, is not the day with the latest sunrise or the earliest sunset. At 40° north latitude, the latest sunrise is January 4th, the earliest sunset is December 7th, while June's latest sunset is the 27th and earliest sunrise is June 14th. Dates change substantially with latitude and are slightly variable because the Leap Day/Leap Year cycle can shift it a bit.

1. An analemma, which can be found in the Pacific Ocean on most globes, is helpful in understanding this phenomenon.

F. North of the Arctic Circle, the Sun will not rise or set at least one day each year, and at the North Pole, there is only one sunrise and one sunset each year (the southern hemisphere has similar occurrences). But consider how the Sun moves through the sky when at the far latitudes (hint: use Stellarium software or a Sun/Earth model).

G. The Flood altered Earth's orbital period around the Sun, the Moon's orbit of Earth, and flung material into space that created the comets and asteroids, not to mention cratered the Moon.

1. "We know that the whole creation [of irrational creatures] has been moaning together in the pains of labor until now." Romans 8:22 Amplified.

a. No one is asked if they want to suffer in this fallen world, and even the physical world and surrounding heavens apparently suffer.

2. Before the Flood, a calendar year was 360 days, consisting of twelve 30 day months. This was measured by the moon's orbital period around Earth and the Earth's orbital period around the sun.

a. Post Flood, it takes 365 days plus roughly 6 hours to orbit the sun, hence we have Leap Day and Leap Year and even Century Leap Year.

(1) Century Leap Year: if a year is evenly divisible by 100 and not evenly divisible by 400, Leap Day is skipped. Dizzy yet?

b. Many early cultures followed the 30/360 calendar, and they also acknowledged the cosmic upheaval that changed the year and month length.

c. The moon serves little purpose to modern man other than as a lovely ornament in the sky; the Flood having affected the lunar cycle renders it an awkward measure of months, and thus we are farther removed from our dependence on these signs God created.

H. Is the gospel presented in the stars?

1. At least a few preacher-teachers have taught "the gospel in the stars." It resembles other mythological ideas but with a gospel basis, wherein characters imposed on the stars in the constellations near the zodiac are said to represent characters in the gospel.

a. Some theorize that God named the constellations, and that He designed them to depict the Gospel in the night sky.

b. Scripture has little to say about this, to our understanding, and there apparently are few reliable, old sources suggesting divine origination to the idea.

I. "... we find in the Scriptures birds and kings and sheep and soldiers acting as interpreters for Almighty God. Grapes and lilies, gold and stubble, corn and cattle, rain and stars all are used by the Holy Spirit to carry our minds across the vast chasm that separates the spiritual from the material." A.W. Tozer, "That Incredible Christian."

VII. Resources

A. Dr. Walter T. Brown, "In The Beginning," older printed book but website is expanded and updated, <http://www.creationscience.com/onlinebook/IntheBeginningTOC.html> aligns with scripture and common sense, very highly recommend, can download without cost.

B. Bryan Nickel, several videos explaining some of Walter Brown's material, <https://www.youtube.com/user/nnlmt28>

C. Stellarium free sky simulation software, <http://stellarium.org/> Many options in setup, I prefer disabling the horizon so it shows sky above and below the horizon. Can also include faux twinkling and meteors. Available in a mobile version but we prefer the next item listed for mobile device use.

D. Heavens Above website, <https://www.heavens-above.com/?lat=45.358&lng=-90.2245&loc=Unnamed&alt=0&tz=CST> Android application, https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.heavens_above.viewer The website has satellite flyovers and much basic sky information, while the mobile application adds a live sky chart (red color, of course).

E. Commentaries cited, Adam Clarke, <https://www.studylight.org/commentaries/acc.html> Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown, <https://www.biblestudytools.com/commentaries/jamieson-fausset-brown/> Verse-by-verse commentary, several versions though not complete, <https://www.studylight.org/commentary/>

F. The gospel in the stars,
Frances Rolleston, "Mazzaroth," published in the 1800s, probably the oldest reference.
Joseph A. Seiss, "The Gospel in the Stars," published in 1882.

E.W. Bullinger, "The Witness of the Stars" published in 1893.

D. James Kennedy sermon, <https://www.djameskennedy.com/full-view-sermon/djk18549a-the-gospel-in-the-stars>.